

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 19, 2010

The Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
The Honorable Michael J. Copps, Commissioner
The Honorable Robert M. McDowell, Commissioner
The Honorable Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner
The Honorable Meredith Attwell Baker, Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

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Disability
Policy
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Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn and Baker:

As the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) sets the rate for Video Relay Service (VRS), we write to underscore how important this service is to the deaf community. VRS allows our deaf constituents to connect instantly with the world through a video monitoring system and communicate in their own language, American Sign Language. They describe it as life altering and indispensable. In fact, more than one hundred thousand deaf Americans now rely on VRS to place calls to medical professionals, friends and family, co-workers, and 911.

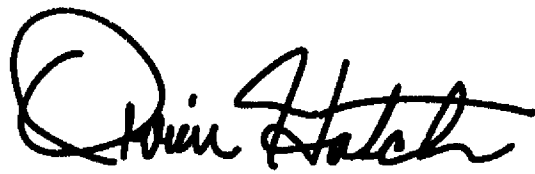
Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires the FCC to promote efficiency, improved technology, nationwide access and functional equivalence for the deaf. VRS is arguably the most functionally equivalent form of relay service available today, and it is essential that the Commission establish a fair and predictable VRS rate that promotes these goals. Many are concerned that the Commission's April 30th rate proposals did not include many of the real costs of providing VRS.

We strongly urge you to adopt a VRS rate that is fair and predictable, a rate that will stimulate and encourage the innovation and advancement that have made VRS the preferred method of communication for the deaf. Given that the VRS program was the target of fraudsters in 2009, we think it is very important to improve program accountability and to provide a fair rate of compensation for services that are important to the deaf community. Careful management and appropriate oversight are necessary to preserve and protect the VRS program so that ASL users and hearing people can continue to communicate with each other over distances. We are confident the FCC is up to the challenge and will ensure that progress in communications for the deaf continues.

Sincerely,



Senator Amy Klobuchar



Senator Orrin G. Hatch

25 MAY 2010 RCUD


Letter to the FCC
May 19, 2010



Senator Mark Warner



Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison



Senator John Thune



Senator David Vitter



Senator Mike Johanns



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 2010

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senate
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

Thank you for your letter regarding the reimbursement rate for Video Relay Service (VRS). I share your support for VRS, which has become a critical communications tool for many who are deaf or hard of hearing.

On June 28, 2010, the Commission unanimously adopted two items to address immediate and long-term approaches for sustaining the vital Telecommunications Relay Services, of which VRS is one form. In an *Order*, the Commission sets interim VRS rates for the July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 period at \$6.2390 for Tier I, \$6.2335 for Tier II, and \$5.0668 for Tier III. These rates represent the average of the current tiered rates and NECA's proposed rates based on actual, historical costs. The *Order* notes that these rates also reflect a balance between the goal of ensuring that VRS providers recover from the VRS Fund only the reasonable costs caused by their provision of VRS and the goal of ensuring quality and sufficient service during a one-year period.

The other item adopted on June 28 is a *Notice of Inquiry* to take a fresh look at the VRS rules with an eye to ensuring that this vital program remains effective, efficient, and sustainable in the future. The *Notice* poses questions that delve into many cost and reimbursement related issues, seeking to make the program less susceptible to the waste, fraud, and abuse that have plagued the current program. Bringing clarity and predictability to VRS compensation is high on the Commission's list of priorities, and we will resolve this proceeding as expeditiously as possible. I am enclosing a copy of the Commission's News Release for your information.

I appreciate your continuing interest in this very important matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 2010

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
United States Senate
459A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warner:

Thank you for your letter regarding the reimbursement rate for Video Relay Service (VRS). I share your support for VRS, which has become a critical communications tool for many who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski



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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 2010

The Honorable David Vitter
United States Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Vitter:

Thank you for your letter regarding the reimbursement rate for Video Relay Service (VRS). I share your support for VRS, which has become a critical communications tool for many who are deaf or hard of hearing.

On June 28, 2010, the Commission unanimously adopted two items to address immediate and long-term approaches for sustaining the vital Telecommunications Relay Services, of which VRS is one form. In an *Order*, the Commission sets interim VRS rates for the July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 period at \$6.2390 for Tier I, \$6.2335 for Tier II, and \$5.0668 for Tier III. These rates represent the average of the current tiered rates and NECA's proposed rates based on actual, historical costs. The *Order* notes that these rates also reflect a balance between the goal of ensuring that VRS providers recover from the VRS Fund only the reasonable costs caused by their provision of VRS and the goal of ensuring quality and sufficient service during a one-year period.

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Julius Genachowski



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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 2010

The Honorable John R. Thune
United States Senate
493 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

Thank you for your letter regarding the reimbursement rate for Video Relay Service (VRS). I share your support for VRS, which has become a critical communications tool for many who are deaf or hard of hearing.

On June 28, 2010, the Commission unanimously adopted two items to address immediate and long-term approaches for sustaining the vital Telecommunications Relay Services, of which VRS is one form. In an *Order*, the Commission sets interim VRS rates for the July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 period at \$6.2390 for Tier I, \$6.2335 for Tier II, and \$5.0668 for Tier III. These rates represent the average of the current tiered rates and NECA's proposed rates based on actual, historical costs. The *Order* notes that these rates also reflect a balance between the goal of ensuring that VRS providers recover from the VRS Fund only the reasonable costs caused by their provision of VRS and the goal of ensuring quality and sufficient service during a one-year period.

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Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

August 5, 2010

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the reimbursement rate for Video Relay Service (VRS). I share your support for VRS, which has become a critical communications tool for many who are deaf or hard of hearing.

On June 28, 2010, the Commission unanimously adopted two items to address immediate and long-term approaches for sustaining the vital Telecommunications Relay Services, of which VRS is one form. In an *Order*, the Commission sets interim VRS rates for the July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 period at \$6.2390 for Tier I, \$6.2335 for Tier II, and \$5.0668 for Tier III. These rates represent the average of the current tiered rates and NECA's proposed rates based on actual, historical costs. The *Order* notes that these rates also reflect a balance between the goal of ensuring that VRS providers recover from the VRS Fund only the reasonable costs caused by their provision of VRS and the goal of ensuring quality and sufficient service during a one-year period.

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Julius Genachowski



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 2010

The Honorable Mike Johanns
United States Senate
404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johanns:

Thank you for your letter regarding the reimbursement rate for Video Relay Service (VRS). I share your support for VRS, which has become a critical communications tool for many who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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Julius Genachowski



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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 2010

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
United States Senate
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hutchison:

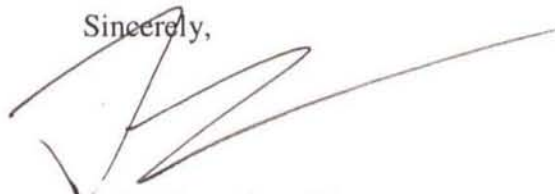
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